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ABSTRACT

This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The 5 titles deal with the following topics: (1) the influence of background knowledge on non-native students' memory for reading passages, (2) the development of a reading textbook with a teacher's manual for English as a second language students in basic college courses in Puerto Rico, (3) an investigation of the relationships between prior knowledge and vocabulary development using semantic mapping with culturally diverse students, (4) effects of prior aural exposure on the oral reading performance and comprehension of Mexican American migrant children, and (5) a three-year longitudinal study on reading developmental processes and behavior of a bilingual child. (HOD)

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Abstracts of the following dissertations are included in this collection:

Aron Helen
THE INFLUENCE OF BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE ON NON-NATIVE STUDENTS' MEMORY FOR READING PASSAGES

Garcia, Matilde
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A READING TEXTBOOK WITH A TEACHER'S MANUAL FOR ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS IN BASIC COLLEGE COURSES IN PUERTO RICO

Karbon, Jacqueline C.
AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT USING SEMANTIC MAPPING WITH CULTURALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

Kirk, Barbara VanDyke
EFFECTS OF PRIOR AURAL EXPOSURE ON THE ORAL READING PERFORMANCE AND COMPREHENSION OF MEXICAN AMERICAN MIGRANT CHILDREN

Wongla, Anchalee
A THREE-YEAR LONGITUDINAL STUDY ON READING DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES AND BEHAVIOR OF A BILINGUAL CHILD

THE INFLUENCE OF BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE ON NON-NATIVE STUDENTS' MEMORY FOR READING PASSAGES

Order No. DA8507427

ARON, HELEN, ED.D. *Rutgers University The State U. of New Jersey (New Brunswick)*, 1984. 79pp. Chairperson: Martin Kling

Problem. This study was designed to investigate (1) the influence of background knowledge on memory for expository text of community college freshmen who are non-native speakers of English and (2) specific acculturation factors which might affect the acquisition of such background knowledge. Previous research suggested that background knowledge would significantly affect memory for text. However, most studies had used narrative prose composed specifically for the experiment. Previous research also indicated that acculturation factors such as the amount of social distance that non-natives perceived between themselves and their countrymen would positively affect second language proficiency and thus affect mastery at acquiring background knowledge.

Procedure. Thirty-one native speakers of English and thirty-one non-native speakers of English were asked to recall all they could of two reading passages from the *New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test*. One passage had a universal theme (no specific knowledge of American history and culture was essential for passage comprehension), while the other had an American culture-bound theme. Recall was measured using holistic scoring of the subjects' protocols.

Non-native subjects were also administered a vocabulary test to measure language proficiency, a questionnaire on their educational background and length of U.S. residence, and Acton's *Professed Difference in Attitude Questionnaire* to determine perceived social distance between the subjects, their countrymen, and Americans.

Findings. The major finding was that background knowledge had a significant effect on memory for expository prose; subjects who were native and who were non-native speakers of English did not differ in their recall for text with a universal theme, but they did differ significantly, $p < .05$, in their recall of text with an American culture-bound theme. None of the acculturation factors tested was found to be statistically significant.

Conclusions. Caution must be exercised when using reading recall or reading comprehension for placement or proficiency testing of persons in their second language. Scores may be significantly affected by passage theme since non-natives do not share a wealth of background knowledge in common with test writers and first language testees. Thus, evaluation instruments may be biased against the non-native.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A READING TEXTBOOK WITH A TEACHER'S MANUAL FOR ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS IN BASIC COLLEGE COURSES IN PUERTO RICO

Order No. DA8505457

GARCIA, MATILDE, ED.D. *New York University*, 1984. 423pp. Chairperson: Professor Harvey Nadler

The purpose of this study is to develop a reading textbook with a teacher's manual for English as a second language students in basic college courses in Puerto Rico. The textbook incorporates the recent research on the reading process and considers the needs of these students.

The organization of the textbook was influenced by the psycholinguistic theory of reading proposed by Frank Smith who views reading as an interaction activity between the reader and the text. The reader arrives at meaning by selectively choosing information and then integrates it with his knowledge. The exercises are geared towards activities that induce the reader to use strategies which are based on factors within himself or herself and not merely in the text.

This textbook has ten chapters each containing the development of the following reading strategies: prior knowledge exercises, prediction exercises, establishing the purpose for reading the selections, syntactical and organizational clue exercises, comprehension check exercises, and "checking your reading strategies." Each chapter is based on topics that conform to the interests and experiences of the Puerto Rican population for which it was developed.

The teacher's manual contains an analysis of Frank Smith's theory of reading along with other viewpoints and practices that coincide with his theory. The teachers are provided with suggestions as to how to incorporate that research in the reading class. This analysis will also serve to satisfy the need for reading teachers to understand what reading is: how it is learned and how it is taught. By utilizing the guidelines in the teacher's manual, teachers should be able to use the textbook more effectively.

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT USING SEMANTIC MAPPING WITH CULTURALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

Order No. DA8500826

KARBON, JACQUELINE C., PH.D. *The University of Wisconsin - Madison*, 1984. 195pp. Supervisor: Dale D. Johnson

This study examined the resources and processes used by children of different cultural groups as they engaged in vocabulary development. Several researchers have addressed the role of cultural background in various dimensions of reading comprehension. Overall, findings suggest that familiarity with the implicit background knowledge underlying a text facilitated text comprehension and recall.

The study was done with rural Native American, inner-city black, and suburban white sixth grade students. Subjects received semantic mapping vocabulary instruction and then were individually interviewed to determine relationships between prior knowledge and vocabulary acquisition.

Analyses were done through interview procedures designed to examine the relationships among cultural background, prior knowledge and the acquisition of new vocabulary.

Analysis of students' responses indicated that: (1) The three groups did exhibit differences in vocabulary. (2) All groups strongly tended to exploit their experiences; that is, first hand experiences strongly influenced all lists. (3) All groups tended to associate new words with direct experience words. (4) All groups more often recalled words correctly when they associated them with words they had generated. (5) All groups evidenced chunking of words and networking among words and categories on their maps.

The results provide evidence that students do exploit their unique experiences as a means of developing vocabulary. Thus, vocabulary instruction should be effective if teachers encourage students to relate new words to those known words unique to their experiences, and to use those known words as a bridge to help them learn new words.

EFFECTS OF PRIOR AURAL EXPOSURE ON THE ORAL READING PERFORMANCE AND COMPREHENSION OF MEXICAN AMERICAN MIGRANT CHILDREN

Order No. DA8507507

KIRK, BARBARA VANDYKE, PH.D. *Michigan State University*, 1984. 163pp.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the facilitative effects of prior aural exposure and ethnically related content on the English oral reading performance and comprehension of bilingual Mexican American migran children. Fifteen bilingual Spanish-speaking subjects, nine or ten years of age reading at fourth-fifth grade level, were selected from the Title I Migrant Education Program.

Procedure. Subjects read four expository social studies passages, two related to Mexican American culture and two related to other cultures. For one ethnically related passage, subjects first listened to a recording of half the passage, retelling it afterwards. The same procedure was followed for ethnically unrelated passages. Oral reading performance was analyzed according to the Goodman and Burke *Reading Miscue Inventory*. The first 25 non-repeated miscues

of the portion of the passage to which the subject did not receive aural exposure were analyzed. Comprehension was assessed by the quality miscues and recall. These data were subjected to multivariate analysis of variance for repeated measures.

Findings. Prior aural exposure resulted in significantly fewer miscues and higher comprehension, as measured by retelling, than the spontaneous reading of passages. Oral reading performance did not differ significantly on the types of miscues generated, graphic and phonemic proximity, syntactic and semantic acceptability, or correction of miscues. With respect to the effects of ethnically related content, miscues generated while reading ethnically related passages more often preserved the intended meaning of the text. However, attempts to correct miscues were more successful for ethnically unrelated content. For comprehension, recall was significantly higher for the portion of the ethnically related passages to which the subject did not receive aural exposure. Conversely, for the entire passage, recall was significantly greater for ethnically unrelated passages. An interaction effect indicated that prior aural exposure resulted in significantly higher comprehension for ethnically unrelated passages.

A THREE-YEAR LONGITUDINAL STUDY ON READING DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES AND BEHAVIOR OF A BILINGUAL CHILD

Order No. DA8509241

WONGLA, ANCHALEE, PH.D. *Texas Woman's University*, 1984. 220pp.
Chairman: Rose Spicola

The purposes of this study were to investigate the reading developmental processes of a Two-year-old, Thai child who was immersed in an English-speaking school environment; to identify the child's behaviors indicating reading development occurred at home over a three-year period.

The study was based on the developmental theory that literacy skills develop in the same natural way as a spoken language if children are immersed in an environment of a printed language, as they are immersed in the spoken language.

The subject, Pim, was the only child in a family where reading and writing were common activities. To allow Pim to learn to read naturally without pressure, the investigator who was Pim's mother neither attempted to give her any kind of instruction in reading unless Pim asked, nor directly instructed her to do any kind of reading activity. The only assistance the parents offered Pim was to read to her and to answer her questions about story pictures and content, and other print in her environment. Pim was allowed to choose, actually, one book a day from all Thai and English children's books she possessed. Then, one of her parents, mostly her mother read the story through one time to Pim. When her mother read to Pim, usually at bedtime, the mother consistently pointed where she read.

Pim's reading skills gradually developed. At 4 years, 10 months of age, when Pim confronted some words she could not read, she used one of the following strategies: (a) attempting to read by using her memory of text, picture clues, and graphic clues; (b) skipping; or (c) substituting with words of similar semantics.

At 5 years old, Pim could read most logo's and her children's books correctly. By this time, Pim saw herself as a real reader and did not want the investigator to point as she read any more.

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